

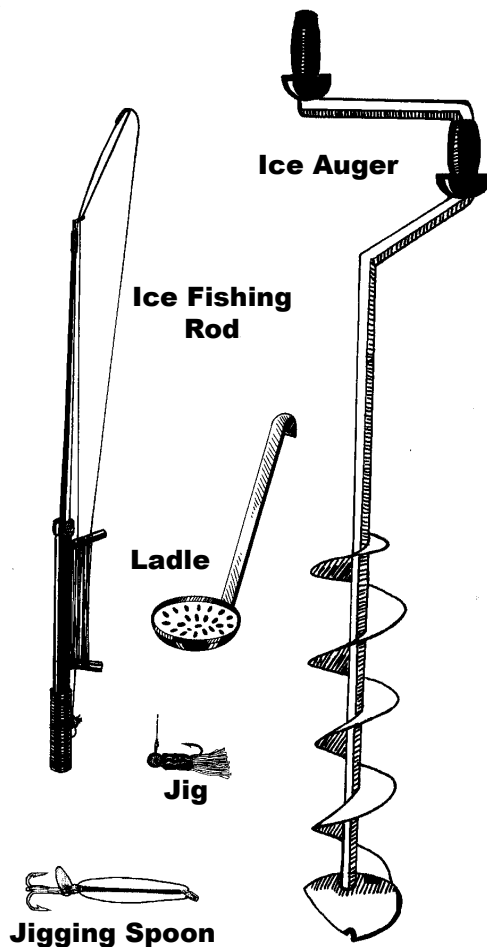
Beneath the Ice

Ice fishing on lakes or reservoirs can provide some much-needed outdoor adventure during those long winter months. Yellow perch and rainbow trout are the most common species pursued beneath the ice, and a number of Idaho waters have both species in abundance.

Ice is generally safe for walking when 3 to 4 inches thick; if you are venturing out on snow machines or ATVs, wait for 8 to 10 inches of clear, solid ice. Ice fishing with a partner is a good idea, particularly during early and late winter.

While specialized ice fishing gear is available, any rod and reel will suffice for the casual ice angler. Terminal tackle should include an assortment of jigs, glow hooks and ice flies, in combination with baits such as maggots, worms or cut bait.

Ice Fishing Equipment



Mike Demick, IDFG

Kids and ice fishing - they go together!

To get started, drill a series of test holes. Rules dictate that no hole may be larger than 10 inches in diameter for safety's sake. Most Idaho waters allow for up to 5 lines per angler (when the bite is on, it gets busy!). Try different locations at varying depths until you find fish. Perch generally are found near the bottom, whether the water is 10 feet deep or 40, while trout tend to be found closer to the surface.

Jigging can be a very effective ice fishing technique. To jig, drop the bait to the bottom, then reel up approximately 2 feet of line. Slowly raise the rod tip about a foot, then allow it to settle back down. Repeat this procedure until a fish strikes.

Some anglers prefer a more passive approach, simply still fishing and waiting for a strike. Either way, when the fish begin to bite, the ice fishing action can get fast and furious.